



**Ministry of Health
Pharmacy and Poisons Board**

PUBLIC STATEMENT

PUBLIC ALERT: USE OF DICLOFENAC FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT

The Pharmacy and Poisons Board (the Board) is mandated under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act (Cap 244) to disseminate information on medical products to health professionals and to the public in order to promote their rational use. The Board therefore wishes to draw the attention of the public to the use of 'Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs' (NSAIDs), specifically Diclofenac for pain management.

NSAIDs as a class, if used at high dose and for long periods, are associated with an increased risk of blood clots in the arteries especially in patients with underlying heart or circulatory conditions or with certain cardiovascular risk factors, which in some cases has led to heart attack or stroke.

Diclofenac is a widely used medicine for relieving pain and inflammation, particularly in painful conditions such as arthritis. Overall, the benefits of diclofenac are greater than its risks. Therefore, to mitigate the risks associated with use of diclofenac, the public is notified of the following:

- There is a small risk of heart attack or stroke in patients taking systemic diclofenac regularly, especially at high doses (150 mg daily) and for long periods;
- Use of diclofenac is no longer recommended for patients with history of a heart attack or stroke, heart failure, blockages to blood vessels to the heart or brain or have had an operation to clear or bypass such blockages, or circulatory problems that restrict blood flow to your limbs;
- If you smoke or have other risk factors such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, your doctor will need to assess if you should use diclofenac and the best way to take it;
- If you are on long-term diclofenac treatment you will need to have your treatment reviewed to ensure that it is still right for you. You are advised to speak to your prescriber at your next scheduled appointment.

- You should not stop taking your treatment without talking to your healthcare professional;
- If you have any questions, speak with your healthcare professional;

The Board advises the public against self-medication with painkillers especially diclofenac. Diclofenac, should only be dispensed or used upon prescription by a duly qualified healthcare professional.

The Board would like to thank the public for the continued efforts to ensure safe use of medicines and encourage them to provide feedback by contacting the Board through 0795 743 040 or sending an email to pv@pharmacyboardkenya.org or report any suspected adverse events or quality defects on medical products and health technologies at <http://pv.pharmacyboardkenya.org>.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

4TH MARCH, 2022